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Teresa Stoppani

**ALTERED STATES OF PRESERVATION**

**'Preservation'**

*Preservation* was the title of OMA/AMO's main contribution to the 12th Architecture Exhibition at the Venice Biennale (29 August - 21 November 2010). Rem Koolhaas, the practice principal and founder, was awarded the Biennale's Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement, and he continues to surprise us for his foresight. Always at the forefront of the architectural debate, at the Biennale Koolhaas's attention concentrates on the existing, on the traces and remainders of past and present architectures (as well as non-architectures, or, more generally, the built environment), which the designer has to confront today, ubiquitously, at different scales and with different cultural and intellectual approaches. While at the pre-Great Recession Venice Architecture Biennale of 2006 OMA/AMO had shown masterplans for new islands in the Persian Gulf, this year the global practice concentrates on a given world of near and remote pasts, on which today's architects are called to express judgement. The scenario in which architects operate today—which might be dubbed the “new old”—is a palimpsest of different thicknesses and resiliences, possibly subject to violent erasures and heretic insertions.<sup>2</sup>

Inside the Palazzo delle Esposizioni, in the same centrepiece rooms occupied four years ago by Dubai's pre-financial-crisis optimistic developments, OMA/AMO present a vision for the future of the past that challenges chronologies and questions established definitions of architectural preservation. While the theme of preservation is (relatively) new for OMA, the approach and the presentation styles used here are signature OMA: from the manifesto (on this occasion, AMO's redefinition of contemporary 'preservation'), to rich visuals of the practice's projects cleverly mixed with photographic documentation of the existing, to sharp slogan-like captions and self-quotations, to graphically striking statistics, graphs and time charts, to a fetishistic metonymic collection of rescued furniture and found objects.

Unlike OMA's other visual arguments, branding narratives and cultural provocations, this sensitive subject, which OMA'S exhibition only superficially skims, is complex, multifaceted and deadly serious. It is not only the survival of built structures that is of concern here, or indeed that of the architectural discipline itself, long probed, challenged, pulled and stretched in all directions by OMA/AMO in recent years (the practice's palindromic acronym a telling symptom of their fluidity of approach to a professional role in constant redefinition). What is at stake here is the survival of the whole world as we know it, and us with it. But the concern in OMA's vision remains specifically architectural. No green or otherwise-coloured visions are proposed, but rather a polemical reality check that exposes a 'now' engulfed in strategies of preservation that are more politics- and market-driven than they are the expression of environmental (and environmentalist) or cultural and architectural concerns.

Organized in two rooms, the exhibition proposes different interpretations on the topic of preservation. The first room documents the 'conditions found by OMA upon arrival at sites of possible preservation, 1969-2010's and offers a sampling of OMA's past and present interventions on the existing. The selected works vary in scale, purpose and chronology: from the 1980 study for the

renovation of the Koepel Panopticon prison in Arnhem; to the vast orange cushion for the lift space of the 1998 Maison à Bordeaux, declared a French ‘monument historique’ in 2001, and reduced to an ‘empty vessel’ after the death of its owner; to the original furniture of the Haus der Kunst in Munich, currently undergoing strategic renovation by OMA and Herzog and de Meuron; to glass and miniatures from the curatorially re-masterplanned Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg (2008-2014); to the books containing the current ‘cultural masterplan’ and concept design for the Fondaco dei Tedeschi in Venice, reinvented as ‘a culturally-programmed department store’ (2010).

This first exhibition room opens questions. This time, Koolhaas’s retroactive manifesto is not applied to the found city,<sup>4</sup> but, rather, constructs an intelligent and instrumental selfretrospective. While both Koolhaas’s 1978 book *Delirious New York* and this exhibition were and are aimed at the future, and at preparing the grounds for a wider strategy without yet making it explicit,<sup>5</sup> the exhibition draws from the work of the Office for Metropolitan Architecture over the last 40 years, constructing a new frame for its reconsideration. *Preservation* thus addresses not only OMA’s architectural projects of intervention on other architects’ works, but produces also an alternative history of the practice, documenting the evolution of its own approach to existing buildings and cities.<sup>6</sup> And while both OMA and AMO refrain from articulating pure criticism, they continue to produce it by making, redoing, referring, re-interpreting, re-using - ideas as well as buildings and cities. Theirs is a practice of repetition, in design as well as in writing, which characterizes the manifesto: a statement of intention that provokes thought but remains undemonstrated, needing to shift into multiple modes of implementation to construct its arguments (literally) and demonstrate its consistency on the ground. So, even the assumptions of *Preservation* are challenged, and the very definition of preservation is turned upside down in the different interpretations that the exhibition offers.

### ‘Cronocaos’

‘To preserve’ means, among other things, to ‘maintain (something) in its original or existing state’; to ‘maintain or keep alive (a memory or quality)’; and also, as known (and tasted) by all, to ‘prepare (fruit) for long-term storage by boiling it with sugar’ (The Oxford American Dictionary). Translated into architecture this definition (or plurality of definitions) suggests a complexity that should be kept at play in order to understand the approach to ‘preservation’ provocatively announced and implemented but scarcely theorized by OMA.

Deciding whether that which is to be maintained by preservation is the ‘original’ or the ‘existing’ state of a building has occupied the architectural debate on restoration for centuries - the two positions championed, respectively, by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc (‘original’) and John Ruskin (‘existing’). Significantly, their positions remain the key references for any debate on preservation, have informed all subsequent views, and are quoted in the OMA/AMO exhibition.<sup>8</sup> Equally significant is the fact that since then no voice of equal intensity – OMA/AMO claim - has been raised on the issue of preservation, and their exhibition laments this void in the contemporary architectural debate and its critical elaborations: ‘the arrogance of the modernists made the preservationist look like a futile, irrelevant figure. Postmodernism, in spite of its lip service to the past, did no better. The current moment has almost no idea how to negotiate the coexistence of radical change and radical stasis that is our future.’

OMA/AMO’s concern invites us to rethink preservation in the sense that to ‘maintain or keep alive’ (from the dictionary definitions) be focused not so much on the opposition of ‘original’ and ‘existing’, but rather on the process that, for future accessibility and enjoyment (and sustainment) requires drastic transformative actions – such as the boiling of fruit with sugar – which are in fact a process of production of something else and new.

If to preserve is to act in order to keep something – to keep going, keep from rotting, from dissolving, or just keep - then preservation is always already an intervention, a project, an action that, in order to keep, changes the course of events. Preservation, by definition, can never be neutral. But this is no

news, and even the dictionary records that preservation is ‘that state of being preserved, especially to a specific degree’. Preservation is always ‘to a specific degree’: relative and somewhat impossible to reconcile with life, which is by definition imperfect.

For OMA, preservation, although ‘a theme long neglected’, is intrinsically bound to contemporary construction and urban theory, and must be ‘central to any experience of the twenty-first century landscape’. The exhibition proposes preservation ‘as an instrument of architectural thinking and invention’.

*Cronocoas*, the second room of displays, presents ‘the wrenching simultaneity of preservation and destruction that is destroying any sense of a linear evolution of time’. Here, in a destabilized chronology, each project, each image, is recorded with at least two dates: that of the building’s beginning and that of OMA’s proposal or intervention. Presented in typical OMA fashion, as a book, unbound and pinned on the wall, texts and images alternate on blocks of loose pages, for the exhibition visitors to select, take home and recombine as they please, possibly reorganizing the multiple chronologies in yet more chaotic ways – as in the city, as in the territory, as in the informed and yet arbitrary decisions of the architectural project. As usual with Koolhaas, the provocation of the message resides in the medium: the installation in this case mimicking the layering, overlaps, erasures and interpretations that occur in the city.

In the same room, on large posters hanging from the ceiling, the exhibition emphasizes that which has been rendered ‘immutable through various regimes of preservation’ and is ‘now off-limits, submitted to regimes we don’t know, have not thought through, cannot influence’, thus lamenting a form of non-architectural preservation (legislative, political, etc.) that is antagonistic to the architectural intervention and in fact prevents it. Among the concerns voiced here are the questions of ‘how the “preserved” could stay alive and yet evolve’, how different cultures have interpreted permanence, and how preservation’s ‘undeclared ideologies’ could be considered in the present. The key issue that the exhibition addresses is the fact that preservation has so far placed a ‘continuing emphasis on the exceptional – that which deserves preservation’ while ‘there are no ideas for preserving the mediocre, the generic’.

And so what OMA labels ‘preservation’ is in fact a manifold position calling, on one hand, for a restriction on the indiscriminate and undiscriminating listing and regulated protection of anything of even questionable architectural and artistic value, and, on the other, for a new discerning freedom to acknowledge the value of the ordinary, the generic, that which – once reframed, re-conceptualized and ‘preserved’ - could become both a(n often) random sampling, and paradigmatic of a certain time, context, situation. To produce this reversal of perspective, the scale of preservation must be expanded, in both the physical and the conceptual sense. If preservation is to address the whole of the contemporary city, with its stratifications of past and still-active traces, usable and ‘alive’, the very idea of preservation must include in its definition the related destruction that makes it possible at an expanded scale and conjugates it with new construction. In this way preservation is married to the new and projected into the future, fully becoming part of - or reappropriated by – the architectural project. Preservation is thus confirmed as a relative achievement, and redefined as dynamic - as changing and mutable as the object or the context that it addresses. Its achievement then remains always in the partial and transitory condition of the ‘to a specific degree’ suggested by the generic dictionary definition.

The exhibition traces OMA’s questioning of preservation back to the years when Koolhaas, having studied the unorthodox, ‘delirious’ north-American modernism and its impact on the metropolis, led OMA to engage in a project on the contemporary city with a series of design proposals for European cities. Here they found a territory complicated by layers and layers of history, vertical growth and horizontal expansion combined with voids, obsolete industrial areas and countryside encroached by urban sprawl – all sites that also demanded design decisions on preservation. So, addressing Europe in 1991, they ask, ‘What, out of this generic ur-soup, deserves eternal life?’; and in the project *Mission Grand Axe for La Défense in Paris* (1991): ‘What happens if all architecture older than 25 years is scraped? An entire territory is liberated as a strategic reserve. The city can think of itself in terms of

creative transformation ...'. Selective preservation at urban scale produces a postmodern version of the tabula rasa, partial and reinvented, which keeps alive samples of the 'post war architecture considered "ugly" and responsible for all our ills.'

### ***Doing 'nothing' and Junking***

In the competition project for the expansion of Zurich Kloten Airport (1995) OMA's proposal dismissed the iconic new required by the brief, preferring instead to reuse the existing and reactivate its unused spaces with a work of restitching, reweaving and tunneling. In the ongoing curatorial master plan for the St. Petersburg Hermitage Museum, it is the dilapidated condition of the building complex that is preserved. Here the museum becomes the exhibition as well as the exhibited: 'If dilapidation of a structure is itself an effect of history, its qualities are possibly as meaningful as the museum's artifacts. Can dilapidation be preserved? Can it illuminate the museum experience?' But, perhaps most of all, OMA seem to be proud of the subtle cultural and spatial agency they performed in the UNESCO World Heritage Site of the former coal sorting factory (Kohlenwäsche) of the Zeche Zollverein in Essen (2006), where the minimal project inserts the new cultural programme without removing the industrial machinery. Here OMA congratulate themselves for having 'nearly achieved the utopian ambition of doing "nothing", no stripping, no sublimity, no ruin, just nothing ...'.

But doing "nothing" is no little thing. It can have a powerful, direct, local impact on refunctionalizing as reprogramming and reactivation of existing buildings and infrastructures.

It can also produce a shift in perspective and provide new definitions that affect the cultural agency of architecture. It is here that OMA's cultural counterpart AMO performs its important text-project to respond to the excesses of preservation and their consequent restrictions on the project of architectural intervention (both on existing buildings and in the city in general). Opposing the UN Heritage Convention and aimed at counteracting 'the proliferation of cultural or natural heritage [that] constitutes a risk of trivializing the heritage' AMO's 2010 'Convention Concerning the Demolition of World Cultural Junk' that is presented at the 12th International Architecture Exhibition of the Venice Biennale is aimed at protecting and enabling (preserving!) growth and change in the existing city. Mirroring the structure of the text and the itemization of selection criteria of the 1972 UN Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage, AMO produces 'its urgent counterpart, a collective definition of artifacts that ought to disappear, to make room for new development. If the empire of preservation continues to grow, it needs its own opposite: a domain of permanent change ...'.

Paraphrasing the UN convention, AMO proclaims that 'it will *liberate oversaturated urban territory through the demolition of junk*, and [...] *new opportunities* [...] *will emerge*'. Provokingly, 'the removal of cultural and natural heritage that constitutes Insignificant Universal Junk' implies that 'parts of the cultural or natural heritage are insignificant and transient and therefore need to be demolished to facilitate the growth and development of mankind as a whole'.

In fact, AMO's proposed removal of 'Insignificant Universal Junk' calls for a worldwide revision of the politics of preservation and its legislation, claiming that it has reached paroxysmal excesses. Hence the exhibition title: here what needs to be preserved only 'to a specific degree' is preservation itself. Together with it, the role of the agents of preservation and their responsibilities (listed and emphasized in one of the exhibition panels) are questioned. If the 1931 Athens Charter for the Restoration of Historic Monuments is a call for the '*wardens of civilizations*', and the 1964 Venice Charter for the Conservation and Restoration of Monuments and Sites emphasizes a '*full authenticity*' whose undistorted meaning is to be permanently maintained, the 1994 Nara Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage sees a shift towards a shared and pluralistic agency of '*collective memory*' and '*heritage diversity*', and the 2005 Vienna Memorandum on World Heritage and Contemporary Architecture explicitly proclaims the '*recognition of human coexistence*' (all emphases added by AMO).

The illustration captions, brief texts and the very manifesto for the removal of 'Insignificant Universal Junk' are written in Koolhaas's flamboyant, signature rhetoric.

Cloned, fractured, and multiplied into AMO, authorship and style are here removed from the individual and multiplied in a way not dissimilar to the multiplication of Walt Disney's hands to keep up with the multinational success of his Mouse and other creations. So while Rem Koolhaas's practice has become global, the pluralized architect has become 'generic' well beyond architecture. If, with the questioning of authorship, the architect started to disappear in his/her/their own product, the proclaimed total act of disappearance is fully accomplished once it is applied to the existing city. Doing 'just nothing', combined with the demolition of 'World Cultural Junk', is a strong project that redefines once again (and once and for all) the role of architecture as a cultural agent – and the power of its words – while at the same time recognizing the spatially defining power of other words, those of legislation and regulations. It is with these that the architectural voice must continue to engage, after the shock of its provocations (one of which is this exhibition).

### ***Toward A New Theory***

The reframed retrospective of OMA's projects and works, and AMO's propositional text well draw the attention of the architectural public, and they will surely provoke reactions and trigger further considerations on 'preservation', but they are far from developing a new theory of preservation. This has recently been attempted by Fred Scott with his book *On Altering Architecture*, which proposes alteration as 'the mediation between preservation or demolition'.<sup>9</sup> Scott observes that 'the cause of obsolescence is more generally derived from social and economic changes in the wider society'.<sup>10</sup> While the book focuses mainly on projects of intervention on existing buildings, the reasons for obsolescence that it identifies immediately link even the smallest interior space to use, occupation and ultimately to the city. 'Change of use causes a massive change in the rituals of occupation. Buildings change as the city changes.'<sup>11</sup>

The possibility for a new theory of 'alteration' - a term more explicitly project-biased than OMA's ambiguous use of 'preservation' - occupies the difficult and as yet untheorized ground between conservation and the project of the new. Little is written on alteration in architecture because, Scott suggests, alteration 'is in fact antipathetic to the crucial architectural impulse. [...] architecture seeks to sweep away the present and build a better, or certainly different world, and this is why alliances so naturally form between architects and the reigning powers'.<sup>12</sup> Considering both Ruskin's position that links restoration to destruction, and Viollet-le-Duc's theory of restoration as reconstruction of 'a perfection that might never have existed at any time',<sup>13</sup> Scott places alteration somewhere in between, reminding us that conservation of whatever type can never be neutral and is therefore already a project;<sup>14</sup> and reconstruction never renders something that 'was' but produces instead an idea of the building that proposes both a theory of the past and its reconstruction, thus projecting it into the future. Therefore, in either way, because they destroy the past, or because they reinvent it, 'Works of scholarly restoration are akin in some ways to the making of a new building. Both have the same purist tendencies, and the drive towards completeness.'<sup>15</sup>

'[W]here then is the line between restorative work and new work, what is interventional work and what new design?',<sup>16</sup> Scott asks. This is the key question, and the one that OMA's work tackles frontally and practically – *per exempla* - but without attempting to develop it theoretically. Scott parallels architectural alteration - both conservation and restoration can only be alteration for him (significantly, having clarified this position, Scott avoids the ambiguities and the reversals of the term 'preservation') - to the delicate, both interpretative and creative work of the translation of poetry. While the translation of poetry moves across languages and cultures, the translation performed by architectural alteration, static in space, moves across time;<sup>17</sup> to be successful it must be able to speak always, and it can do so only if it is able first to mute itself and listen deeply. Here OMA/AMO's polyglot global approach would argue that nothing is foreign to anything anymore, and that the global, inclusive lingua franca<sup>18</sup> of the architect - master surfer, chameleon, brander and plural, and as such able to incorporate his<sup>19</sup> predecessors - enables him to speak and write all languages and all times.

Other ways, unassuming and subtler in their slow and tentative approach, may be possible. *To Have & To Hold, Di Amare e Onorare. Innovative conservation theory & practice from the nineteenth to the twentyfirst century*<sup>20</sup> is Scotland's participation at the 2010 Venice Biennale, curated by the NVA (*Nazionale Vitae Activa*). Short-lived, the installation consists of a video projection presented during the closing weekend of the Biennale, accompanied by a public debate. The videos present a case study as a site of theoretical and practical approach to the documentation, reuse and reinvention of a ruin of modernism, the abandoned St. Peter's Seminary at Kilmahew (Scotland) by Gillespie, Kidd & Coia, completed in 1966 and closed in 1980. Murray Grigor's film of the seminary, 'Space and Light Revisited' (2009), which photographs in black and white the present ruin of the building, is shown side by side and synchronized with the director's 1972 original colour footage of the building still in use.

The films illustrate the past and the present of this fragile building, and the debate introduces ideas for its future. 'Radical new plans seek to consolidate the first Modernist ruin in the UK and to gradually bring its interior spaces back to productive use through an international design competition in 2012.'<sup>21</sup> Both the images and the discussion read the ruined building in conjunction with the woodland that surrounds it (and that now partially invades it). 'By exploiting the building and grounds in their current state of dereliction and decay, the aim is to archive, maintain and re-purpose what has become a significant twentieth century ruin through a gradual process of restoration and new design.'<sup>22</sup> Preservation here is reconceived as a slow, tentative and participatory process that proceeds through small moves - a walk and a productive garden first, and then perhaps the acquisition of the building and the project for a new life for it.<sup>23</sup>

The intrinsic fragility of the ruin of modernism opens up the need for different approaches to preservation. What is fragile about St. Peter's Seminary is not only the physical structure of the building, now reduced to a ghostly shell, but the very use for which the building was designed as well as the institution that commissioned it (the Catholic Church of Scotland). The architectural language and the lifestyle proposed by its design are now both obsolete. Its state of ruination exposes this fragility, as it renders visible and material its transformation from building to 'building in waiting'. It reinforces its relation to the context, which here becomes physical invasion, whether by the landscape (the growth of vegetation) or by society (traces of occupation and appropriation by graffiti as a form of dissolved 'authorship').

Becoming a ruin also opens up possibilities that go beyond the reinstatement of the previous function: not only are the building and its function questioned, but the ruined building becomes a site for interrogations, for material questions that can be invented (literally, 'found') out of it, rather than for it.<sup>24</sup>

The key difference between this project, and OMA's designs and AMO's manifesto on preservation, is that in this case the project does not need a brief, does not serve a function, but lets the building speak and slowly find one for itself. OMA's work and AMO's 'junking' aim to accelerate and accumulate different scenarios while still holding their authorship - of a project, or of a trademarked idea. In NVA's *To Have & To Hold, Di Amare e Onorare* installation, films and events, preservation is proposed as a slow, changing, ongoing and yet radical process of reinvention - of both the building and the practice of preservation itself.

**Teresa Stoppani** (MArch IUAV Venice, DrRic Arch&UD Florence) is Reader in Architecture at the University of Greenwich. She has taught at the IUAV Venice, the Architectural Association London, RMIT Melbourne and UTS Sydney. Her writings focus on the relationship between architecture theory and the design process in the urban environment, and on the influence on the specifically architectural of other spatial and critical practices. Recent publications include the book *Paradigm Islands: Manhattan and Venice* (Routledge 2010); 'The Architecture of the Disaster' (*Space & Culture* 2012); 'Material and Critical: Piranesi's Erasures' in *Mobility of the Line* (I. Wingham ed., 2012). She is currently working on the book *X Unorthodox Ways to Rethink the City* (Routledge 2014).

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- 1 'OMA is a leading international partnership practicing architecture, urbanism, and cultural analysis. [...] The counterpart to OMA's architectural practice is AMO, a design and research studio based in the company's Rotterdam office. While OMA remains dedicated to the realization of buildings and masterplans, AMO operates in areas beyond the traditional boundaries of architecture, including media, politics, sociology, renewable energy, technology, fashion, curating, publishing, and graphic design.' Thus the practice is defined on the OMA website < <http://www.oma.eu> > (accessed 02.01.2011).
- 2 In *On Altering Architecture*, Fred Scott reminds us that the word 'heresy' 'means, literally, no more than choice'. Oxford Etymological Dictionary, quoted in Fred Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2008, note 6 p. 90. Scott observes: 'If the original is the orthodox, then any alteration is heretical. [...]. Heresy requires consciousness. The intervening designer must construct a critique of the host building. This is the purpose of stripping back. Perhaps all alteration needs to be viewed as heresy.' Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, p. 78.
- 3 These and the following quotes, unless otherwise indicated, are from the exhibition panels.
- 4 Rem Koolhaas, *Delirious New York. A retroactive manifesto for Manhattan*, London and New York: Thames & Hudson, 1978.
- 5 Rem Koolhaas, 'Postscript: Introduction for New Research "The Contemporary City"', *Architecture and Urbanism*, no. 217 (October 1988): 52. Rem Koolhaas, 'Beyond Delirious', *Canadian Architect*, no. 39 (January 1994): 28-30.
- 6 Unlike the groundbreaking practice monograph *S,M,L,XL* (Rem Koolhaas, Bruce Mau and OMA, *S,M,L,XL*, New York: Monacelli Press, 1995), which organized OMA's projects and Koolhaas's text by scale.
- 8 One of the exhibition panels opposes quotes by John Ruskin on the 'Authentic' and by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc on the 'Restored'. Authentic: 'Do not let us deceive ourselves in this important matter; it is impossible, as impossible as to raise the dead, to restore anything that has ever been great or beautiful in architecture.' John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1849, p. 206. Restored: 'To restore a building, it isn't to maintain it, to repair or rebuild it, it is to recover a perfection that may have never existed at any given time.' Eugène-Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Dictionnaire raisonnee de l'Architecture*, Paris, 1854-68, vol. III, 'Restauration'.
- 9 Fred Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2008, p. 17.
- 10 Ibidem.
- 11 Ibidem.
- 12 Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, p. 34.
- 13 Ibidem, p. 55.
- 14 '[A]ny attempt to return a building, if only in part, to any previous condition is not conservation but restoration. Any replacement of the worn by the new is restoration. All work on the existing fabric that is additive is restorative.' Ibidem, p. 63.
- 15 Ibidem, pp. 47-8.
- 16 Ibidem, p. 65.
- 17 'As the past is a foreign country, introducing new life into an old building is in many ways like translation, the carrying over of the host building from one age to another.' Ibidem, p. 79.
- 18 I discuss the genesis and elaboration of OMA's lingua franca in 'Learning from Manhattan, designing the frivolous: Rem Koolhaas from "delirious" to "Junkspace"', in Teresa Stoppani, *Paradigm Islands: Manhattan and Venice. Discourses on Architecture and the City*, London and New York: Routledge, 2010, pp. 20-35.
- 19 The architect is still often intended as a 'he', even if plural: architecture as a practice remains gendered - culturally, politically and professionally if not sexually.
- 20 *To Have & To Hold, Di Amare e Onorare. Innovative conservation theory & practice from the nineteenth to the twentyfirst century*, Scotland at the Venice Biennale 2010. Exhibition programme. NVA - for *nazionale vitae activa*, Latin expression that indicates 'the right to influence public affairs' - is a public art charity based in Glasgow that promotes 'non-gallery-based democratization of presentation', and 'public art which articulates the complex qualities of a location through collective action' and collaborative and participatory work. ('About NVA', p. 23.) See: <[www.nva.org.uk](http://www.nva.org.uk)> and <<http://www.nva.org.uk/current-projects/venice-29/>> (accessed 02.01.2011)
- 21 NVA, 'Introduction', in *To Have & To Hold, Di Amare e Onorare*, p. 6.
- 22 'Kilmahew/St Peter's - Statement of Intent', ibidem, p. 11.
- 23 'Goethe wrote that architecture is frozen music; but experience teaches us that it just plays very slowly. It is pointless to dictate what the buildings of the future will look like, or how they will work [...] but we can trace and steer their evolution.' Edward Hollis, 'Anxious Care and Unsightly Aids', ibidem, p. 21. The title of the essay paraphrases Ruskin's 'Watch an old building with an anxious care; guard it as best as you may, and at any cost, from every influence of dilapidation [...] bind it together with iron where it loosens; stay it with timber where it declines; do not care about the unsightliness of the aid.' John Ruskin, *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1849, 'Memory'.

24 Although the Venice debate on the future of Kilmahew/St Peter's does not explicitly refer to Fred Scott's theory or alteration, it clearly resonates with it, providing a sort of theory of 'preservation as alteration' in the field, by practice. And the practice it suggests is a slow one, of tentative adjustments. On the dynamic nature of the ruin Scott writes: 'The ruin is something in process, belonging to the past, present and future, and consequently is an aspect of temporality, contrasted with the preserved building, which is a corpse, a product of the mortician's art, preserved and maintained in an attempt to keep it beyond the reaches of time. [...] The ruin allows privileged views from previously inaccessible viewpoints, and from these it offers a fresh explanation of itself. [...] a ruin may be said to give, in certain circumstances, a more complete expression of a building than when it was newly completed. [...] But above all else, a ruin may be thought of as incomplete.' Scott, *On Altering Architecture*, p. 96.